EDUCATIONAL BOOKS

Astronomy Without a Struggle

THE STAR PEOPLE. By Gaylord Johnson. The Macmillan Company.

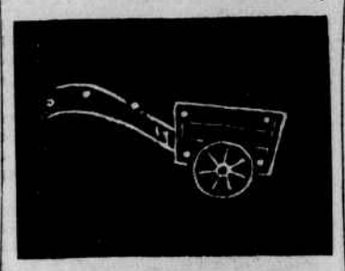
HERE is a gay children's book in a blue cover with black silhouettes, a book not only for children but for all who can be lured by an enticing pathfinder to explore new regions. Now, that is, for near-sighted people and for those who think the stars are only poets' material, they not being poets.

If you have no telescope in your home try holding "The Star People" in one hand, opera glasses in the other and looking now at the first page map, now at the sky. There should be also a third hand to hold an electric torch, and preferably a night without a moon. The effort of peering through the rosy afterglow of the torch to separate one group of sparkles from another is immense fun, and the rhymes which Gaylord Johnson has made up to go with each important constellation make remembering the easiest part.

Every night for seven summer nights Uncle Henry, Betty and the twins go out on the beach to "star gaze," tracing diagrams of what they see with pebbles on the sand. Arcturus, the bright pole star, dippers large and small, and the scarcely less prominent Bear are spotted first. Later Antares the crab and Aquarius the water carrier join other obscure creatures, parts of whom must hopefully be imagined, on the sand.

When Uncle Henry comes again in Christmas vacation a search party equipped with overcoat, mittens, blackboard and chalk troops up the fire ladder to the roof, and there are four more talks. The book is entirely formed of these conversations and rhymes.

Four seasonal maps, a bibliography and an index with dates of appearance and disappearance give the scientific basis of "The Star People." As the practical member of your family of star classics it should have a place on the shelves between "Twinkle, twinkle. . . . like a tea tray in the sky," "Alice in Wonderland" and Milton's Sonnets.



The Great Bear or Great Dipper in England called Charles's Wain.

160,000,000 Use English Language

HISTORIC ENGLISH. By James C. Fernald, L. H. D. Funk & Wagnalls Company.

"IT is possible to travel twice around the world on different lines of progress, and wherever we set foot we shall be standing in countries where English is the dominant language. . . . British territory aggregates 12,780,380 square miles, with a population of 441,440,000; United States territory aggregates 3,574,658 square miles, with a population of 105,000,000. Adding these items we find that the English speaking peoples dominate 16,225,038 square miles, inhabited by a population of 546,410,000. The entire land surface of the earth is credibly estimated at 55,699,315 square miles and the population at something over 1,500,000,000. Thus more than one-fourth of the land surface of the globe and more than one-third of its population are under the dominion of the English speaking peoples. The number of people speaking English as their vernacular has been credibly estimated at 160,000,000. Never before in the whole march of time did any one language have such wide ascendancy over the inhabited earth."

Dr. Fernald had prepared this book after many years of research. Others of his works took precedence in publication because he desired to give the best and most complete history of the English language which vast experience and much study could make possible.

"'Some time before I die,' he had told his associates, 'I am going to write a book which will show that *the English language is what it is because of the way it came into being*. No one can fully grasp the meaning and completely master the use of the English language without knowing the history of English as a language.'"

He began this book more than ten years before his death and gave it the benefit of "all the ideas created in the most mature yet active years of his literary life."

"Language is the expression of a people's life, brimming with the achievements of all its past, and reaching on with shaping and molding power to the generations yet to be. Language molds the thought of those who speak it, exalting or degrading," and Dr. Fernald adds: "No scholar of any race considers himself highly educated unless, for instance, he can read in the original the plays of Shakespeare."

In the opening pages of the book the reader finds himself in England during the years 55-54 B. C. Yes, it is historical, but not the dry history of the pedants. Those who know their ancient history and their history of England find that he has only "hit the high places." He shows how historical events aid or hinder the growth of the language.

A chapter is devoted to "The English Bible." The Anglo-Saxon translation of Matthew xiii. made before 1000 A. D. one might take for a prescription hastily written by one of our learned physicians:

"1. On tham daege tham haelende ut-gangendum of huse he saet with tha sae."

In 1388 a revision of John Wyclif's translation of the Bible rendered this same verse:

"1. In that day Jhesus going out of the hous sat besidis the see."

About 200 years later appeared William Tyndale's translation of the Bible:

"1. The same daye went Jesus out off the housse, and sat by the see syde."

Dr. Fernald goes on to tell of the preparation of the "King James Bible," and why, with its forty-seven eminent scholars acting as translators, this version "is rich with all the best treasures of the previous versions and revisions.

"The English Bible is full of passages where the very word of words has been chosen, and no other could be substituted without loss. . . . The flexible, abundant English proves itself at home in every scene. . . . Descriptions of the beauty and wonder of nature are unsurpassed. . . . The language that is so facile in narrative is mighty, splendid, majestic in description. Where can we parallel its sublimity?"

The book is one of the most interesting we have read, both in the author's own contribution of scholarship in readable form and in the quotations from rare old books not accessible to the general reader.

VIVIAN RADCLIFFE.

Heraldry as Part of History

BRITISH HERALDRY. By Cyril Davenport. E. P. Dutton.

THERE is a lasting romantic glamour about heraldry, with its queer fantastic monsters in blaze of color, and its occult significance. There is fascination about its very terms, the actual meaning of which is usually obscure to the reader,

Arms of Sir Kenelm Digby.

but none the less appetizing; a poetic quality inherent in such words as gules, besant, panache, jessant, fleam. And its monsters are always adorable; for instance, the wyvern, which had the head, wings and front part of a dragon, and a barbed tail, which last was "usually nowed." The student of old French will perhaps guess that "nowed" means knotted—a tail tied into a neat bow knot, or a simple spiral affair. The "bagwyn" was like an antelope, but with goat's horns and the tail of a horse; the basilisk was like a cockatrice, but had a dragon's head at the end of its tail, and the cockatrice was a creature with the wyvern's body, but the head of a cock.

But there is a more serious interest aside from the artistic, picturesque and mythically zoological. The study of heraldry is a necessary part of history, and it reaches far back almost to the beginnings of savage tribal life, as Mr. Davenport points out in his general introduction. He finds its beginning in the tribal totem, or the wearing of some distinctive family of tribal mark, by the most primitive savages, worn so that friends and foes might be easily distinguished. Probably at first it was tattooed or painted on the warrior's skin; later upon his weapons, and when he acquired a shield the distinguishing device naturally was placed upon it as the most conspicuous spot. But it is not until the wearing of armor became general that elaborate heraldry was evolved, though the process had gone far at the time of the Bayeux tapestry, which gives the costumes of the time of the Norman conquest. From that point on it grew more and more complex and important.

Mr. Davenport's book is replete with details; it is a small encyclopædia of the art and is very fully illustrated. His explanations are clear and often strikingly picturesque. He presents in small compass about all the information that will be required by any one except the specialist.

A Dictionary for Word-Lovers

AN ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF MODERN ENGLISH. By Ernest Weekley. E. P. Dutton & Co.

"IN the beginning was the Word," wrote the Apostle John, thereby identifying the Word with divinity. What wonder, then, that so much mystery and majesty lurk in words, through which are expressed the Alpha and the Omega of human thought and feeling?

Such evidently is the lofty interpretation of the significance of words held by Ernest Weekley, A. M., author of the world's most comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of Modern English, a work as much larger than the historic edition of Skeat as the English language has grown from a precocious youth to become the giant of all languages in the multitude of its words and in the versatility of their uses.

To Ernest Weekley has already been credited the authorship of "The Romance of Words," "Surnames," &c., from which has been drawn much of the material found in this his magnum opus. Another important source employed by the author was that monumental lexicon of the ages, "Murray's New English Dictionary," whose method he has followed, to a degree, showing the historic evolution of words, their literal and figurative definitions in different periods. The vocabulary itself has been, broadly speaking, taken from the concise Oxford Dictionary and Cassell's New English Dictionary.

Ernest Weekley is an Englishman with a sense of humor. In spite of his interest in philology he has retained his humanity, which runs through his dictionary like a thread of gold. One is almost impelled to liken him in spirit to—

Euripides, the human, with his droppings of warm tears,
And his touching of things common 'til they rose to touch the spheres.

This Etymological Dictionary is not intended for philologists, but for word-lovers. "Philologs" is the new pet name applied to men and women who have felt the charm and significance of words and who, with sibylline zeal love to plumb their depths.

The author has not hesitated to explain the etymology of slang words which although they may be unhonored in one generation often become the most trenchant literary expressions of the next.

Slight attention is paid to definitions, the emphasis being placed, naturally, upon origins.

Ernest Weekley has won distinction especially on account of his knowledge of foreign languages. He has incorporated thousands of foreign words which are neither Norman-French nor Anglo-Saxon in origin. In addition to these are many neologisms, inherited from the great war, which the author says "may successfully resist that demobilization of war words now actively proceeding." The Anglo-Indian vocabulary of the British army, such as is used by Kipling, has also been drawn upon freely. Not only common nouns but names of persons are included. Thus we learn, for example, why a guy should be named after Guy Fawkes.

Besides words, the author delves into the history and interprets the meaning of phrases, such as "take up," "look out," &c. He answers not only the questions "when" and "whence," but "where," "how" and "why." He is like little Elsie, who upon seeing an animal entirely strange to her asked:

"What's that, Daddy?" And this is the rest of the dialogue:

"A cow."

"Why?"

J. W. JEFFERIS.

Word comes from London that Miss Millicent Wedmore, daughter of the late Sir Frederick Wedmore, is to have a new volume of poems published entitled "In Many Keys," the first in many years. The work will be published by Elkin Mathews of London.

High Schools Came Late

THE HIGH SCHOOLS OF NEW YORK CITY. Published by the High School Teachers' Association of New York City.

SINCE the organization of the High School Teachers' Association in 1900, with the exception of the years of the war, bulletins have been published annually. This handbook of procedure and personnel, edited by Clyde R. Jeffords of Newton High School, Elmhurst, and Claude F. Walker of the Boys High School, Brooklyn, summarizes in compact form the more important changes during the last few years and indicates the present status.

The chronology of the origin and progress of the public school system touches the "high spots" from April 9, 1805, until May 10, 1920. Closely allied with the chronology is an article by Claude F. Walker on "The Origin and Development of the High Schools of New York City."

He says: "The old city of New York, comprising the present boroughs of Manhattan and The Bronx, until 1897 had no public high schools in its rapidly growing educational system. The College of the City of New York, for boys, and the Normal College, for girls, offered to a limited number of grammar school graduates academic instruction of both secondary and more advanced grades, and in many of the grammar schools advanced instruction was given in the last term."

Yet there were eight high schools in operation in Boston in 1890, and a detailed report by a committee that observed their methods had an important influence on the situation here. In a bill effective July 1, 1896, the Board of Education was established and given the power to establish high schools.

The initiation of three high schools in the old city of New York on September 13, 1897, caused a stir of interest. These three schools, formerly known as the Boys, the Girls and the Mixed high schools, are now known respectively as De Witt Clinton, Wadleigh and Morris high schools.

In Brooklyn, Mr. Walker tells us, projects were further advanced. On September 16, 1878, was born the Central Grammar School. In 1886 the school was divided into a girls' section and a boys' section, and on January 5, 1891, each became a high school.

On November 14, 1893, a manual training school was established, and on May 7, 1895, this became the Manual Training High School. On September 14, 1896, Erasmus Hall Academy, founded in 1786, in Flatbush, became Erasmus Hall High School.

In 1897 the high school committee of the Board of Superintendents had committed itself to the establishment of a manual training high school designed not to teach trades but to teach along with science and mathematics and literature the mechanical principles that underlie all trades and the application of art to industry—a school that would develop inventors, engineers, electricians. Stuyvesant High School was organized September 12, 1904.

Italy Gave Caruso And Columbus to Us

THE ITALIAN CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN DEMOCRACY. John H. Muriano, Ph. D. Christopher Publishing House.

THE war intensified the self-consciousness of all the racial groups in this country. Many Americans of the older group felt that our traditions should be wholly Anglo-Saxon. The newer immigrants were placed upon the defensive. As a result we are getting a regular deluge of books which explain the achievements of the various racial groups in this country. It is a good thing that each unit in our nation is becoming articulate.

The Italians are among the races which need an interpreter. We know that Christopher Columbus and Caruso were Italians. We do not realize that Italy has contributed other men of talent and genius. We think chiefly of the Italian labor which has done so much of our rough work.

Dr. Muriano limits his account chiefly to those who are both Italians and Americans—the second generation. He shows what they are doing as citizens. He tries to prove two things. He is concerned in proving that the Italian conforms to our environment. He gives long lists of clubs which are identical in aim to those of other racial groups. He enumerates many Italians who have won success in stereotyped American methods. He also wants to prove that his race has a distinct contribution.

The book is unfortunate in its arrangement. It is full of repetition and digression. It would have been improved if he had not wasted time on clubs of minor importance and had given more information about such an outstanding figure as, for example, Dr. Antonio Stella.

There are so many dialects in Italy that are perpetuated here that the Italian American is at a disadvantage like the races of India, who employ English for their mutual understanding. The author says nothing about the Italians of Albanian descent, although they are relatively as important here in numbers and influence as they are in Italy, to which they contributed Crispi.

What and How

AMERICAN FOOTBALL; HOW TO PLAY IT. By Charles D. Daly. Harper & Brothers.

SINCE Charles Daly left Harvard, where he was an all America quarterback, and became a coach at West Point he has learned a heap about the army. Now, in telling the rising generation of football players the fine points of the game, he uses the tactics of war as illustrations of good football in an interesting and effective fashion. The reading of Daly's book will enable many a "sub" to win his letter; it won't do coaches any harm, and it can't help but give the multitudes of football fans a better appreciation of the games they see.

In detail he covers the elements that make up a football team—the material, the coaching, the captain, the trainer and doctor. Offensive and defensive work, signals, tactics and strategy, individual position play and about everything else pertaining to football except the yellmaster are fully discussed. The book is well illustrated with pictures of stars and diagrams of plays.